

Florida Power and Light Company, in their filing of July 3, 2003, said "In many cases of natural disaster, the electrical grid is returned to normal operational prior to traditional communication means, potentially providing a key element in aiding response teams."

Emergency response during manmade and natural disasters is not a reason to weaken regulations to allow large-scale deployment of BPL. In fact, interference to emergency communications in the HF and low VHF portions of the spectrum is the principal danger of deploying BPL without sufficient regulation.

Amateur Radio operators routinely provide essential emergency communications during disasters. In local emergencies, VHF is sufficient. In regional emergencies, however, HF is the only way to communicate. Just last week in the Northeast, volunteer Amateur Radio operators relayed thousands of health-and-welfare messages during a situation in which our deregulated power industry failed to provide their core service, the deregulated cellphone industry broke down under the load, and the combination of these two factors caused police, fire, and other emergency communications to be unreliable in places.

Monitoring in areas where BPL is deployed on a test basis indicate that BPL-caused interference renders the HF spectrum unusable even under the existing Part 15 standards. Weakening the standards would destroy the "last line of defense" capability of Amateur Radio and other licensed users to communicate during emergencies.